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ABSTRACT

One of the mandates of Quebec's Commission d'evaluation de l'enseignement collegial is to assess institutional policies on program evaluation (IPPE's), and their implementation frameworks. This document examines the Commission's mandate, aims and approach; Commission guidelines on the formulation of institutional policy on program evaluation; and the evaluation conditions and criteria governing the policy and its implementation. Part I of the report covers the Commission's mandate and the renewal of college education in Quebec; the legal framework of college program evaluation; the Commission's aims for evaluation IPPE's; and a progressive approach targeting the development of systematic institutional program evaluation practices. Part II provides a definition of an IPPE; a discussion of the conditions (i.e., leadership, participation, and respect for ethics) and characteristics (i.e., relevance, feasibility, and stringency) of a quality evaluation. This section also describes the essential elements of an IPPE: (1) general policy aims and objectives; (2) responsibility sharing; (3) program information system; (4) method of identifying the programs to be evaluated; (5) program evaluation process; and (6) policy review mechanism. Part II concludes by establishing the connection between an IPPE and the evaluations requested by the Commission. Part III focuses on conditions and criteria for policy evaluation and for the evaluation of policy implementation. A summary of the Commission's requirements and suggestions is appended. (KP)

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Evaluating Institutional Policies on Program Evaluation

General Guidelines

2410-0515

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Québec

Evaluating
Institutional Policies
on Program Evaluation

General Guidelines

2410-0515

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Introduction

The Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial was created under Bill 83, which was assented to on June 15, 1993[1]. An autonomous, independent body, the Commission is mandated to assess institutional policies on the evaluation of student achievement[2] (IPESAs) and institutional policies on program evaluation (IPPEs), as well as their respective implementation frameworks. It is also responsible for evaluating the implementation of the programs themselves[3], and may in some cases rule on a given college's competence to grant the Diploma of College Studies (DEC)[4].

The Commission aims to evaluate institutional policies on program evaluation by maintaining contacts established with the colleges through the publication of this document. It is well aware that its basic choices in terms of policy evaluation and their consequences on the formulation of an IPPE and its implementation will influence not only the process of defining these policies, but also the evaluation practices subsequently used in the colleges. It thus proposes a broad, flexible framework enabling each college to develop an IPPE that reflects the characteristics of the environment in which it will be implemented.

This document is divided into three sections, devoted respectively to the Commission's mandate, aims and approach; the formulation of the policy; and the evaluation conditions and criteria governing the policy and its implementation.

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1. *An Act respecting the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial and amending certain legislative provisions.* Bill 83 (1993, Chapter 26).

2. The Commission has published two sets of general guidelines on evaluating institutional policies on the evaluation of student achievement: *Evaluating Institutional Policies on the Evaluation of Student Achievement. General Guidelines*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1994, 20 pp., and *L'évaluation des politiques institutionnelles d'évaluation des apprentissages. Cadre de référence adapté aux établissements offrant uniquement des programmes conduisant à une AEC*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1994, 22 pp.

3. The Commission has published a set of general guidelines and a general guide on program evaluation: *Evaluating Programs of Studies. General Guidelines*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1994, 14 pp.; and *General Guide to the Evaluation of Programs of Studies by the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1994, 26 pp.

4. The Commission will be publishing general guidelines on the competence of colleges to award the DEC.

Part One

The Commission's Mandate, Aims and Approach With Regard to Institutional Policies on Program Evaluation

1. The Commission's Mandate and the Renewal of College Education

The creation of the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial is an important measure contributing to the renewal of college education. It reflects the collective will of the Minister of Education, the colleges, and the vast majority of organizations and associations in educational and socioeconomic circles to recognize the importance of college-level institutions in higher education and provide them with the tools they need to develop education at this level. As a result of the renewal, colleges will assume more responsibilities in this regard, and internal and external evaluation mechanisms will become more reliable and effective in attesting to the results of this empowerment. Policy and program evaluation should help improve the quality of procedures and, ultimately, owing to the critical reflection fostered by the assessment process, raise the calibre of college education and make it more relevant. As the Commission fulfils the various components of its mandate, the value of a college education and the diplomas colleges offer should receive greater recognition and credibility.

The Commission will thus contribute to the renewal of college education by conducting evaluations aimed at guaranteeing and attesting to the quality of student achievement and study programs at this level.

2. The Legal Framework of College Program Evaluation

The IPPE evaluation mandate is based on the legislation establishing the Commission. This legislation is part of the broader framework of statutes, regulations and directives which specify the obligations and responsibilities of the colleges and the Commission, including the *General and Vocational Colleges Act*, the *Act respecting private education*, the *College Education Regulations* (RREC), and the Decision of the Minister of Education and Science dated 6 January 1994 respecting progressive application measures of college education.

2.1 The colleges' obligations and responsibilities

Section 24 of the RREC[5], scheduled to take effect in fall 1995[6], stipulates that, after consulting the Commission des études, colleges shall adopt an institutional policy on program evaluation and ensure that it is implemented. The General and Vocational Colleges Act stipulates that each college's Commission des études be mandated to advise the board of directors on all matters related to programs of studies, including "proposals for institutional policy on the evaluation of programs of studies," "proposals for programs of studies," and "the selection of learning activities that are within the jurisdiction of the college"[7].

2.2 The Commission's obligations and responsibilities

Under its incorporating legislation, the Commission is mandated to assess each college's institutional policies on the evaluation of programs of studies, and how these policies are implemented[8].

The Commission may conduct an evaluation when and in the manner it deems expedient. It disseminates its evaluation reports as it deems appropriate, and may make recommendations to the college concerned and to the Minister.

3. The Commission's Aims for Evaluating Institutional Policies on Program Evaluation

The following are certain general considerations governing IPPE objectives, the framework within which IPPEs are formulated, and the approach the Commission uses to evaluate them.

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5. *College Education Regulations* (R.S.Q., c. C-29, s. 18; 1993, c. 25, s. 11), s. 24.
6. Decision of the Minister of Education and Science dated 6 January 1994 respecting the progressive application measures of college education.
7. *General and Vocational Colleges Act*, sections 17.01 and 17.02.
8. *An Act respecting the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial and amending certain legislative provisions*, s. 13, 2nd par., subpar. 2.

3.1 IPPE objectives : providing a framework for institutional program evaluation practices

Ensuring a consistently high level of program quality requires the implementation of a policy designed to support evaluation practices. An institutional policy on program evaluation constitutes a tool making it possible to adjust program implementation as needed, propose solutions to potential problems, and conduct in-depth program evaluation. In general, this policy should give colleges more control over the quality of their programs and *show young people and all Quebeckers that they provide a* ***"high-calibre, top-quality education that enables them to attain the highest possible skill standards"***[9].

3.2 A flexible framework for formulating IPPEs

The Commission realizes that for most colleges, formulating an IPPE is a new experience. Consequently, it proposes a flexible framework enabling each college to determine its own general aims and objectives, design a program information system, determine the appropriate moment for conducting an evaluation, define its evaluation process, and decide how to incorporate this new evaluation task into its program management practices. This framework will also enable each college to add components or elements to the policy based on its own specific needs and practices.

These general guidelines are designed to help each college formulate a comprehensive policy to be applied at its own pace based on its experience in the field, its options for action, and the status of its programs.

3.3 The Commission's approach to evaluating IPPEs and their implementation

When evaluating the text of an IPPE, the Commission will essentially try to determine whether the policy constitutes a valuable program evaluation tool. To do so, it will ascertain whether the policy includes the elements and components it considers essential in supporting the evaluations[10], and it will also assess its potential effectiveness[11]. The Commission's recommendations and suggestions will mainly target the improvement of the policy in order to ensure program evaluation quality.

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9. MESS, *Colleges For The 21st Century*, Québec, April 1993, p. 19.
10. This is the scope criterion defined in Part Three of this document.
11. This criterion is defined in Part Three of this document.

When evaluating the implementation of an IPPE, the Commission will take into consideration the college's progressive implementation of that policy. Priority will be given to the creation of a program information system and its use by the college. The Commission will then evaluate the overall results of policy implementation. This final evaluation will consist essentially in ensuring that the policy is implemented effectively, that it results in quality evaluations, and that the college takes the necessary steps to improve program quality[12].

The Commission feels that this progressive, practical approach will result in the harmonious, efficient implementation of the new institutional policy.

4. A Progressive Approach Targeting the Development of Systematic Institutional Program Evaluation Practices

The Commission encourages the colleges to begin by formulating their policy and then implement it on a step-by-step basis. Colleges that are more experienced in program evaluation will proceed more quickly through the various phases.

4.1 Policy formulation

The Commission recommends that the formulation of the IPPE comprise elements inherent to all such policies, i.e., general aims, objectives, responsibility-sharing, and review mechanisms. To be functional, the policy must include the following components, essential to any evaluation tool : first, the implementation of a *program information system* based on a group of key indicators; second, a *method of identifying the programs to be evaluated*, enabling evaluations to be conducted as needed and including general rules governing the frequency of evaluations; third, the development of a *program evaluation process* which includes specific guidelines for the *preparation and content of an evaluation outline*, *the evaluation per se*, and *evaluation follow-up*. The IPPE must thus provide a suitable framework for the college's program evaluation practices. The results of its progressive implementation should render the policy increasingly relevant and operational as the necessary changes are made to its essential components and elements.

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12. These are the compliance and effectiveness criteria defined in Part Three of this document.

4.2 Progressive policy implementation

Step 1 : A program information system

In the short term, the Commission intends to focus on the creation of an information system enabling program implementation to be monitored and analyzed. Such a system comprises indicators, i.e., quantitative and qualitative data representing the "health status" of the programs offered by the college. Applied to a specific program, the monitoring of these indicators allows for immediate action, either by adapting program implementation or by taking steps to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation.

During this first phase, the colleges will also participate in the Commission's program evaluations based on its specific guides. Colleges with operational information systems will find them useful in the evaluation process. In return, this exercise will enhance program evaluation skills.

Step 2 : Partial policy implementation

In the medium term, once the colleges have acquired the necessary experience, they will be capable of implementing the key elements of their policy. They will thus be able to use an operational information system and make the appropriate decisions, i.e., to adapt a program's implementation where the available information so indicates or, where this is not the case, to conduct a program evaluation based on various evaluation questions.

The colleges will continue to participate in program evaluations conducted by the Commission, which may also request that they use their policy to carry out certain program evaluations under its supervision, e.g. the evaluation of a program offered at only one college.

Step 3 : Full policy implementation

In the longer term, the Commission feels that the colleges could systematically evaluate their programs themselves. The choice of programs to be evaluated would then be based on the status of each program, the maximum interval between two in-depth evaluations, and various external requests made, for instance, by the Commission or an accreditation agency.

* * *

By following this procedure, the Commission believes that the colleges **will gradually be able to develop systematic program evaluation practices based on a methodic, credible evaluation process. Incorporated into current program management practices, this process will attest to their ability to ensure adequate follow-up of their programs.**

Part Two

Formulation of the Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation

1. Definition of an Institutional Policy on Program Evaluation

The Commission views the IPPE as a management tool designed to help colleges conduct program evaluation.

It defines the IPPE as follows :

> *An official document in which the college outlines how it assumes its responsibility for evaluating its programs of studies*[13] *and attesting to the results.*

This document is approved by the college's board of directors following consultation with its Commission des études.

2. Conditions and Characteristics of a Quality Evaluation

Experience acquired to date in the field of program evaluation[14] shows that *leadership*, *participation*, and *respect for ethics* are three conditions essential to a quality evaluation. It also shows that quality evaluations are characterized in particular by their *relevance*, *feasibility*, and *stringency*. The Commission will consider these conditions and characteristics when evaluating policies and their implementation.

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13. The RREC defines a program of studies as follows: "an integrated set of learning activities leading to the achievement of educational objectives based on set standards." *College Education Regulations*, Québec, 1993, s. 1.

14. Based on the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, an account of whose work is published in *The Program Evaluation Standards. How to Assess Evaluations of Educational Programs*, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage Publications, 1994, 222 pp.

2.1 Conditions

Leadership

Appropriate *leadership* is apparent when various phases of the evaluation process are carried out by persons or authorities who believe in its importance and are capable of ensuring its success. Consequently, it is essential that the highest authorities of the college make a firm commitment to the principle of evaluation, incorporate it into their management practices, help carry it out, and ensure the necessary follow-up. It is also important that a program be evaluated by individuals who are directly involved in its implementation and who have the authority and commitment to see it through under optimum conditions.

Participation

A commitment to *participation* is apparent when the persons and authorities involved in the evaluation of a program participate actively in the various phases of the evaluation process. This participation is necessary to ensure not only that the evaluation produces the desired results, but also that any recommendations which may subsequently be formulated are clearly understood and followed.

Among the persons and authorities involved, the participation of teachers in identifying problems and seeking solutions appears essential to the success of the evaluation. Other parties should also participate, especially students. Depending on the type of evaluation, the opinion of the professional and technical staff, former students, and representatives of the labour market and universities could be very important.

The Commission encourages widespread participation with a view to developing a corporate culture capable of producing quality program evaluations and incorporating this evaluation task into regular program management practices. This calls for a firm commitment on the part of all those involved to seeing the evaluation process through.

Respect for ethics

To ensure the success of its evaluations, it is important that the college establish a *code of ethics* to guide those responsible for evaluation and those in charge of processing and disseminating the information obtained. Such a code clearly defines the boundaries of information dissemination based on both the confidential nature of personal information and the public's right to information. It can also prevent eventual conflicts of interest.

2.2 Characteristics

Relevance

Designed as a management tool for colleges, the policy must contribute to a *relevant evaluation,* i.e., one which is capable of clearly establishing program status, finding concrete solutions to the problems observed, and helping improve education quality. Only after the evaluation is completed will it be possible to determine its relevance by assessing its impact on the implementation of the program evaluated, on those involved in the implementation, and on the college itself. It is nonetheless important to ensure before the process begins that all conditions favour a relevant evaluation.

Feasibility

Evaluation feasibility is based on a realistic evaluation, a simple, appropriate methodology, a climate of trust, and consideration of the various interests of the persons and authorities involved. To be feasible, the evaluation process must be easily applicable and efficient, and take into account the input of those involved. The choice of evaluation questions must be based on the resources available and subsequent action options. In short, feasibility implies that the college's policy will generate an efficient evaluation process based on the time and resources available, the interests of those involved, and options for action.

Stringency

The *stringency of the evaluation process* concerns the quality of the information and the approach used to obtain it. This information must be technically accurate and contribute to subsequent decision-making. If decisions related to evaluation results are to be credible, they must be based on a logical sequence beginning with the evaluation questions, proceeding to the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, and ending with conclusions and recommendations. Evaluation questions must be clear and specific, the data accurate and valid, the analyses explicit, and the recommendations relevant. This stringency of the evaluation process and methods must contribute to producing valid, reliable, and credible evaluations.

3. Essential Components of an IPPE

For program evaluation to be efficient, the Commission believes that any policy should include the following essential components or their equivalent :

- General policy aims and objectives
- Responsibility-sharing
- Program information system
- Method of identifying the programs to be evaluated
- Program evaluation process
  - Evaluation outline
  - Evaluation
  - Evaluation follow-up
- Policy review mechanism

The Commission indicates the elements defining or characterizing each of the components. It also suggests other elements likely to contribute to formulating the policy[15].

3.1 General policy aims and objectives

The *general aims* express the *principles, values* and *orientations* which determine the fundamental priorities of the policy as defined in the objectives. They guide the college in conducting the evaluation and implementing its results.

The Commission feels that the principal aim of any program evaluation policy should be to ensure ongoing improvement of the quality of education offered to the students.

The *objectives* express the goals of, and the results expected from, the implementation of the policy and the resulting program evaluations[16]. Formulated clearly, precisely, and concretely, they are measurable and focus on achieving the other policy components, usually within a predetermined time frame.

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15. To facilitate formulation of the IPPE, the Commission has summarized its requirements and suggestions in an appendix. Some examples are also provided to clarify its position.

16. In general, the policy makes a distinction between the objectives pertaining to its implementation and the general objectives targeted by the program evaluations. Of course, each program evaluation targets specific objectives that fall within the general objectives defined in the policy.

3.2 Responsibility-sharing

The policy provides for a clearly defined formula of responsibility-sharing with regard to *the program information system, the method of identifying the programs to be evaluated,* and *the program evaluation process*. Responsibilities are normally assumed by a number of individuals, committees, or administrative and academic bodies, i.e., the board of directors, the Commission des études, program administrators, program committees, departments, teachers, technical and professional staff, students, etc.

The policy identifies an *authority* (individual or committee) in charge of implementing the evaluation policy. A *second authority*[17] is appointed to conduct program evaluation; if this authority is a committee, the policy may include general rules governing its makeup.

3.3 Program information system

Monitoring is an essential element of program management. So that this element may be carried out, the policy provides for the creation of a program information system and sets out its components and operating conditions[18]. This system includes indicators and data[19] which pertain to enrolment, progression through school, the success rate, teachers' and students' perception of the program, job placement, employers' assessment, university admission, and the success rate for university studies, and which contribute to monitoring program development.

In addition to enabling immediate corrections to be made to any flaws detected, this information system, which could be described as a "program control panel," also constitutes a decisive element in a systematic program evaluation practice. Along with other organizational or cyclical factors, a periodic review of information system data and

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17. In general, two separate authorities are appointed for program evaluation and policy implementation. However, the same authority may assume both roles.

18. The Commission will pay special attention to the description and operating conditions of this component when evaluating the text of the policy.

19. Most colleges already use a more or less developed information system in their program management. In addition to the information it gathers itself, the college may use data from sources such as the Ministère de l'Éducation, including documents produced using the Système d'information et de gestion des données sur l'effectif collégial (SIGDEC) and the Système d'information sur les cheminements scolaires au collégial (CHESCO); or from the Service régional d'admission du Montréal métropolitain (SRAM), including publications based on the Profil scolaire des étudiants par programme (PSEP). The colleges will be able to follow the progression of their former students with the university student inventory (RECU) system, thanks to the harmonization of the student's permanent code.

indicators will help determine the appropriate moment for conducting a program evaluation. It will also help determine the questions to be included in the evaluation outline.

3.4 Method of identifying the programs to be evaluated

The policy sets out the rules for using the "control panel" to identify which programs should be evaluated. It also determines when evaluations should take place, for example, a few years after the implementation of a new program or of major changes in an existing program; or when a program has not been evaluated for the maximum interval established by the college.

3.5 Program evaluation process

The policy outlines how a program is evaluated, from the preparation and approval of an evaluation outline to the production of an evaluation report and the assessment of its results.

To facilitate the task of the evaluation committees and ensure a certain uniformity in the evaluation process, the policy defines the criteria to be used to assess the main characteristics of a program[20].

Evaluation outline

The policy describes the method for preparing an evaluation outline and the administrative phases it must go through before it is approved. In general, preparation of the outline is based on an analysis done to specify the nature and scope of the evaluation to be carried out. Thus, the data and indicators in the program information system can contribute to establishing the program status and defining a number of priority factors which should undergo an in-depth review during program evaluation. Approval of the outline by college authorities allows them to exercise the necessary leadership to conduct the evaluation and incorporate the results into program management and the college's strategic plans.

The policy determines what should be included in a typical evaluation outline. It includes a description of the program status and the list of topics to be studied.

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20. Colleges may use the criteria described by the Commission in its *General Guide to the Evaluation of Programs of Studies by the Commission d'évaluation de l'enseignement collégial*, Québec, Gouvernement du Québec, 1994, 26 pp.

Evaluation

The policy defines the conditions for conducting program evaluation and completing an evaluation outline. These conditions may pertain to the preparation and validation of data collection tools, the participation of individuals and college authorities and, where necessary, referral to external experts, as well as the progress of the report from its preparation and completion to its approval and dissemination. These conditions comprise the typical content of an evaluation report.

Evaluation follow-up

The policy establishes links between program evaluation and decisions made by the college in this regard by explaining the conditions governing the preparation and adoption of an *action plan* by college authorities. This plan translates the recommendations made pursuant to evaluation into action by the administrative units in charge of the program.

The policy also sets out rules governing the dissemination of results, which must respect the confidential nature of the personal information contained in the evaluation reports.

3.6 Policy review mechanism

The importance of program evaluation as well as the perspective of progressive policy implementation call for a review mechanism whereby changes may be made as needed. These changes are approved by the college's board of directors after consultation with the Commission des études.

4. Connection With the Evaluations Requested by the Commission

The essential components of the policy can also serve as a framework for program evaluations requested by the Commission, especially for the preparation of self-evaluation reports. If the college deems it useful, the policy may provide for specific conditions or the adaptation of existing conditions to the context of the evaluation of a program by the Commission. These conditions may concern, for example, the "responsibility-sharing" and "evaluation process" components.

Part Three

Evaluation Conditions and Criteria Governing an IPPE and Its Implementation

This third section sets out the conditions and criteria set by the Commission for each evaluation phase, i.e., evaluation of the policy and evaluation of its implementation.

1. Evaluating Institutional Policies on Program Evaluation

1.1 Policy evaluation conditions

The Commission will evaluate the text for the components and elements it considers essential and assess the policy's potential to serve as an effective framework for its users, especially in helping them create a useful program information system, conduct quality program evaluations, and incorporate the evaluation task into the college's program management practices.

1.2 Policy evaluation criteria

The Commission has established two criteria for evaluating the policy : the IPPE's scope and its potential effectiveness.

- **Scope**

  This criterion enables the Commission to ascertain whether the IPPE contains all the components and elements it has deemed essential.

- **Potential effectiveness**

  This criterion enables the Commission to assess the policy's potential to serve as an effective framework for its users, allowing them to benefit from an efficient program information system and conduct quality evaluations, i.e., evaluations characterized by their relevance, feasibility, and stringency. It also enables the Commission to assess the validity of the mechanisms created to ensure that evaluation results are incorporated into program management practices.

1.3 The Commission's decision on the policy

Once it has completed its analysis of the policy, the Commission makes one of the following decisions :

1) *The policy is satisfactory.* All the criteria have been met and the Commission feels that the description of the components and elements contained in the policy should contribute to guaranteeing the quality of program evaluations and the incorporation of the results into program management practices. The Commission may suggest improvements to the college where it deems such suggestions relevant. The college is not obliged to follow up on these suggestions, but the Commission would like to know whether it plans to do so.

2) *The policy is partially satisfactory.* Essential elements or components are absent or incomplete and consequently, the policy has shortcomings which may significantly affect the quality of program evaluations and their follow-up. Changes are thus necessary, and the Commission includes with its decision recommendations on which the college must follow up.

3) *The policy is unsatisfactory.* Numerous essential components or elements are absent or incomplete. In such a case, the quality of the program evaluations cannot be guaranteed. The policy must be reviewed and submitted to the Commission again.

1.4 The policy evaluation report

The Commission approves the policy evaluation report and then forwards it to the college and to the Minister. It makes the results of this report public as it deems appropriate.

2. Evaluating the Implementation of the Institutional Policies on Program Evaluation

2.1 Conditions for evaluating policy implementation

To conduct a *comprehensive* evaluation of a college's implementation of an IPPE, the Commission will use the following elements : a self-evaluation report written by the college at its request, the reports on program evaluation conducted as part of the policy and

their follow-up, and the evaluation of one or more components of the IPPE that the Commission may eventually conduct as part of its program evaluation in each college.

When appropriate, the Commission will specify the content of the self-evaluation report, which may include evaluation by the college of the creation of the program information system, the method of identifying the programs to be evaluated, the evaluation process per se, and implementation of the resulting action plans.

By studying the program evaluation reports, the Commission intends to determine whether the college is implementing its policy efficiently and whether its evaluations are likely to result in concrete progress.

Analysis of these two elements, along with the results of the evaluations already conducted on one or more components of the IPPE, may result in a visit to the college concerned. Such a visit enables Commission members to meet directly with those involved in the evaluation process, better understand policy implementation strengths and weaknesses, and suggest or recommend appropriate measures to improve implementation results.

2.2 Evaluation criteria for policy implementation

The Commission has established two criteria for evaluating policy implementation : compliance and effectiveness.

- **Compliance**

  This criterion enables the Commission to evaluate the implementation of the essential components and elements provided for in the policy. It expresses the extent to which the implementation of the essential components and elements corresponds to their description in the text. Where necessary, evaluation of the implementation shall take into account the changes made by the college since the policy was evaluated by the Commission.

- **Effectiveness**

  Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy implementation enables the Commission to determine the extent to which the policy helps ensure the quality of program evaluation. More specifically, it aims to determine how the implementation of the components and elements described in the policy contributes to quality program evaluations (characterized

by their relevance, feasibility and stringency), ensures the incorporation of these results into program management practices, and improves the programs evaluated.

2.3 The Commission's decision on policy implementation

Once it has completed its analysis of policy implementation, the Commission makes one of the following decisions :

1) *Policy implementation has satisfactory results.* All criteria have been met and the Commission feels that the program evaluations conducted comply with the description of the policy's essential elements and components and that they are high-quality, i.e., relevant, feasible, and stringent. In addition, the recommendations issued based on program evaluation results have been incorporated into program management practices in the form of action plans approved by the college's board of directors and implemented by the appropriate authorities. Finally, these evaluations are effective in the sense that their results contribute to improving the programs. The Commission may suggest improvements to the college where it deems such suggestions relevant. The college is not obliged to follow up on these suggestions, but the Commission would like to know whether it plans to do so.

2) *Policy implementation has partially satisfactory results.* The implementation of certain components and elements essential to the policy reflects shortcomings which are particularly obvious in the quality of the evaluations conducted or the incorporation of their results. The Commission thus includes with its decision recommendations which the college is obliged to follow up on in its subsequent program evaluations. The Commission may also suggest improvements to the college where it deems such suggestions relevant.

3) *Policy implementation has unsatisfactory results.* The implementation as it is carried out significantly jeopardizes the quality of program evaluations or does not ensure incorporation of their results, and therefore does not help improve program quality. The Commission therefore proposes, in the form of recommendations and suggestions, appropriate measures to remedy the situation.

2.4 The evaluation report as it pertains to policy implementation

Based on its analysis of policy implementation, the Commission indicates one of the three above-mentioned decisions in a draft report and forwards a copy to the college. Depending

on the decision made, the report stresses the strengths and, where applicable, the weaknesses. It includes suggestions or recommendations to improve or remedy policy implementation. Indications on how the college should follow up on this decision may be provided.

The college then has a given amount of time to submit its comments to the Commission and, where applicable, inform it of what it has done or plans to do to enhance the quality of policy implementation.

After receiving the college's input, the Commission prepares and adopts its final evaluation report on policy implementation and forwards a copy to the college and to the Minister. The Commission makes the results of this report public as it deems appropriate.

Appendix

Summary of the Commission's requirements and suggestions

Components	Required elements	Suggested elements
1. General aims and objectives	Specify the general aims of the policy. Specify the objectives of the policy. Specify the general objectives targeted by the program evaluations.	
2. Responsibility-sharing	Appoint an authority (individual or committee) responsible for implementing and reviewing the IPPE. Appoint an authority or person responsible for : – the program information system; – the method of identifying the programs to be evaluated. Appoint an authority responsible for the program evaluation process.	If the authority is a committee, provide for general rules governing its makeup so as to ensure the participation of those concerned, especially the teachers.
3. Program information system	Describe the components of the program information system by specifying the types or categories of data and indicators used to monitor the implementation of each program and assess the results. Specify the operating conditions of the information system.	Provide for data and indicators pertaining to enrolment, progression through school, the success rate, teachers' and students' perception of the program, job placement, employers' assessment, university admission, and the success rate for university studies. Specify, for example, the conditions governing data management and the production and dissemination of reports on program status.
4. Method of identifying the programs to be evaluated	Determine a method of identifying the programs to be evaluated including general rules governing the use of the "control panel." Provide for general rules governing the frequency of evaluations.	
5. Program evaluation process	Describe a program evaluation process including the following components : 1) preparation and approval of an evaluation outline; 2) evaluation; 3) evaluation follow-up. Specify the criteria used to assess the program's main characteristics.	

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Components	Required elements	Suggested elements
5.1 Preparation and approval of the evaluation outline	Describe the method for preparing an evaluation outline and the administrative phases it must go through before it is approved. Specify the content of a typical evaluation outline, including a description of the program status and the list of topics to be studied.	Establish a link with the program information system. Typical outline content may include the following : the criteria on which program assessment is based; indications on data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods; and an estimate of the resources required.
5.2 Conducting the evaluation	Specify the conditions for conducting an evaluation. Describe the content of a typical evaluation report.	Include details on data collection, analysis, and interpretation; preparation and completion of the report through to its adoption and dissemination; participation of college authorities and individuals involved, including teachers; and, where applicable, referral to external experts. A typical evaluation report may include the following : program description, a description of the evaluation process, the data on which the evaluation is based, and the resulting conclusions and recommendations.
5.3 Evaluation follow-up	Specify the conditions for the preparation and approval by college authorities of a plan of action translating the recommendations made pursuant to evaluation into action to be taken by the administrative units in charge of the program. Specify the rules governing dissemination of the results.	
6. Policy review mechanism	Describe the periodic policy review mechanism. Point out that the changes are approved by the board of directors after consultation with the Commission des études.	
7. Connection with the evaluations conducted by the Commission		Describe the specific conditions which serve as a framework for the evaluations conducted by the Commission.

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